Amendments to the Claims:

The following claims will replace all prior versions of the claims in this application:

1.-15. (Cancelled)

16. (Currently amended) A method ~~pharmaceutical composition~~ as claimed in Claim 43 ~~15~~ in which the ratio M:Fe for the compound is at least 1.1:1.

17. (Currently amended) A method ~~pharmaceutical composition~~ as claimed in Claim 43 ~~15~~ in which the ratio M:Fe for the compound is at least 1.3:1.

18. (Currently amended) A method ~~pharmaceutical composition~~ as claimed in Claim 43 ~~15~~ in which the ratio M:Fe for the compound is at least 1.7:1.

19. (Currently amended) A method ~~pharmaceutical composition~~ as claimed in Claim 43 ~~15~~ in which the ratio M:Fe for the compound is up to 5:1.

20. (Currently amended) A method ~~pharmaceutical composition~~ as claimed in Claim 43 ~~15~~ in which the ratio M:Fe for the compound is up to 2.6:1.

21. (Currently amended) A method ~~pharmaceutical composition~~ as claimed in Claim 43 ~~15~~ in which the ratio M:Fe for the compound is up to 2.4:1.

22. (Currently amended) A method ~~pharmaceutical composition~~ as claimed in Claim 43 ~~15~~ in which the additional metal comprises calcium.

23. (Currently amended) A method ~~pharmaceutical composition~~ as claimed in Claim 43 ~~15~~ in which the additional metal comprises magnesium.

24. (Cancelled)

25. (Currently amended) A method ~~pharmaceutical composition~~ as claimed in Claim 43 ~~15~~ in which the compound additionally contains at least one of sulphate, chloride and oxide.

26. (Currently amended) A method ~~pharmaceutical composition~~ as claimed in Claim 43 ~~15~~, in which ~~comprising~~ the compound is obtained as precipitate from a solution of a mixture of metallic salts.

27. (Currently amended) A method ~~pharmaceutical composition~~ as claimed in Claim 43 ~~26~~, in which the compound is obtained as the unaged precipitate from said solution of mixed metal salts.

28. (Currently amended) A method ~~pharmaceutical composition~~ as claimed in Claim 43 ~~26~~, in which the compound is obtained as the washed and unaged precipitate from said solution of mixed metal salts.

29-42. (Cancelled)

43. (Currently amended) A method for treating hyperphosphataemia, in an animal in need thereof, which comprises administering to said animal, a therapeutically effective amount of a phosphate-binding, mixed metal compound which is free of aluminum and contains iron (III) and an additional metal M selected from the group comprising magnesium, calcium, lanthanum and cerium.

44. (Previously presented) A method as claimed in Claim 43 in which said compound has a phosphate binding capacity of at least 30% by weight, as measured by any of the following methods (1) or (2), over a pH range of 3 to 7.

(1) adding 1 gram of said ~~solid~~ mixed metal compound to 25 ml of 40 mmol l^{-1} sodium phosphate buffer solution, homogenizing and gently agitating at room temperature for 30 minutes, centrifuging at 3000 rpm for 5 minutes, filtering through 0.22 µm millipore filter and measuring the soluble phosphate in the supernatant thus produced;

(2) adding 1 gram of said ~~solid~~ mixed metal compound to 25 ml of 20 mmol l^{-1} sodium phosphate buffer solution, homogenizing and gently agitating at room temperature for 30 minutes, centrifuging at 3000 rpm for 5 minutes, filtering through 0.22 µm millipore filter and measuring the soluble phosphate in the supernatant thus produced.

45. (Previously presented) A method as claimed in Claim 43 in which said metal compound contains hydroxyl and/or carbonate ions.

46. (Previously presented) A method as claimed in Claim 43 in which said compound has a hydrotalcite type structure.

47. (Previously presented) A method as claimed in Claim 44 in which said compound has a phosphate binding capacity of at least 30% by weight of the total weight of phosphate present as measured by method (1) or by method (2) over a pH range of 2 to 8.

48-63. (Cancelled)